

# OPERATIONAL ART IN THE KOREAN WAR: A COMPARISON BETWEEN GENERAL MACARTHUR AND GENERAL WALKER

A Monograph

by

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## ABSTRACT

OPERATIONAL ART IN THE KOREAN WAR: A COMPARISON BETWEEN GENERAL MACARTHUR AND GENERAL WALKER, by Major Remco van Ingen, 56 pages.

This monograph addresses operational art during a specific period of the Korean War. Both General Walton Walker and General Douglas MacArthur developed operational approaches to unify Korea when the decision was made to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel into North Korea. General MacArthur's approach used two major ground commands, was more daring, but more complicated. General Walker, on the other hand suggested an approach under one unified ground commander, seemed more methodical, and less daring. Ultimately, General MacArthur's approach was the one executed. The X Corps amphibious assault did not bring the anticipated result. The out loading of X Corps, in preparation for the assault took longer than anticipated and the enemy had mined the sea approaches to Wonsan. These two factors combined with an unsynchronized ground attack by I ROK Corps eliminated the chance of a successful envelopment.

The monograph provides insight in the relationship between the commander's personality, his previous operational experiences, and his preference for a particular type of operational approach.

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## ACRONYMS

CINCUNC	Commander in Chief United Nations Command
FEC	Far Eastern Command
LOCs	Lines of Communications
NKPA	North Korean People's Army
ROK	Republic of Korea
SWPA	South West Pacific Area
UNC	United Nations Command
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

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## INTRODUCTION

In operational terms, Korea was a very important war, a bridge between the immense conventional battles of World War II, with their clear-cut sense of winning and losing, and the long twilight struggle that the United States had recently decided to undertake as a result of the Truman Doctrine. It was the first battle in the American war on communism; it would not be the last.

—Robert M. Citino, *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm: The Evolution of Operational Warfare*

The U.S. military, in particular, went from disaster to decisive victory to disaster—all in the short space of five months.

—Robert M. Citino, *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm: The Evolution of Operational Warfare*

On June 25, 1950, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) attacked the Republic of Korea (ROK) by crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel with 135,000 men.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet trained NKPA forces quickly overran ROK positions.<sup>2</sup> Unable to stem the tide, the South Korean President, Syngman Rhee requested support from the United States.<sup>3</sup> During a speech at the National Press Club on January 12, 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, had not mentioned the ROK to be within the Defensive Perimeter in the Far East.<sup>4</sup> Even so, President Harry S. Truman and key members of his cabinet started discussing options to counter the communist aggression quickly after learning about the North Korean aggression. At a crisis meeting in the Blair House on June 26, 1950, President Truman made his initial decisions to support South Korea, in anticipation of a United

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<sup>1</sup>Larry H. Addington, *The Patterns of War Since The Eighteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 270.

<sup>2</sup>James F. Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990), 61.

<sup>3</sup>Minutes of teleconference between CINCFE and Department of the Army (Nr DA TT 3417), June 25, 1950, Truman Library, [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-21-12.pdf#zoom=100](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-21-12.pdf#zoom=100) (accessed January 11, 2012), 3.

<sup>4</sup>Dean G. Acheson on the America Defense Perimeter in Asia, 1950, *The Cold War: a History through documents*, edited by Edward H. Judge, and John W. Langdon (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1999), 64.



Nations Security Council Resolution.<sup>5</sup> President Truman and the members of his National Security Council (NSC) assumed that Soviet communist expansionism incited the North Korean aggression. This view was in line with the conclusion of report NSC-68. The attack on South Korea formed the confirmation of Soviet aggression.<sup>6</sup>

The outbreak of the Korean War came as a surprise. This surprise caught the United States unprepared for war. By 1950, the U.S. Armed Forces were downsized considerably, in particular the Army.<sup>7</sup> Until the discovery of the explosion of a Soviet atomic bomb on August 29, 1949, the United States relied mostly on nuclear deterrence to prevent any conflict. Eighth Army, on occupation duty in Japan, was understrength, under trained, and under equipped at the time of North Korea's attack. General Walton H. Walker had just instituted a training program to increase the readiness of his army, but at the time of the outbreak of hostilities his regiments, divisions, and army lacked training.<sup>8</sup> The equipment and weaponry was old and worn out. When the first elements of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division deployed it had only 60 percent of its Table of Equipment available for operations.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Phillip C. Jessup, Minutes Blair House Meeting, June 26, 1950, PSF/NSCF, Truman Library [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-12-3.pdf#zoom=100](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-12-3.pdf#zoom=100) (accessed January 10, 2012), 4.

<sup>6</sup>Remco van Ingen, "The Dutch Perspective on NATO Development During The Korean War" (MMAS Thesis Leavenworth; U.S. Army CGSC, 2012), 80.

<sup>7</sup>Adam W Hilburgh, "General Walton H. Walker: A Talent for Training" (Monograph Leavenworth; U.S. Army CGSC, 2011), 28.

<sup>8</sup>Roy E. Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South of the Naktong North to the Yalu* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1961), 113.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

### Synopsis of Operations Prior to Crossing 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel

At nine o'clock on June 26, 1950, President Truman decided to assist South Korea by allowing General Douglas MacArthur to use Seventh Fleet and Air Force Far East for operations south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>10</sup> By that time, General MacArthur had already received and responded to requests for emergency resupply.<sup>11</sup> Two days after the Blair House meeting General MacArthur received extended freedom to use U.S. ground forces with the main objective to retain access to a port and airports for future United States involvement.<sup>12</sup>

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) issued resolution 82 in response to the hostilities on June 25, 1950.<sup>13</sup> UNSC resolution 83 surpassed this weak initial international response. The Soviet Union refused to participate in the UNSC meeting because of a disagreement over the denied UNSC membership of the newly formed People's Republic of China. The Soviet Union's absence allowed resolution 83 to get accepted. This stronger resolution clearly identified North Korea as the aggressor.<sup>14</sup> This opened up the way for international support for the ROK. The United States' Far Eastern Command (FEC) would form

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<sup>10</sup>Jessup, Minutes Blair House Meeting, 4; the time used is the time in Washington D.C. Washington D.C. is 13 hours behind Seoul time.

<sup>11</sup>Minutes of teleconference between CINCFE and Department of the Army (Nr DA TT 3415), June 25, 1950, Truman Library, [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-21-11.pdf#zoom=100](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-21-11.pdf#zoom=100) (accessed January 11, 2012), 5.

<sup>12</sup>Emergency message from JCS to CINCFE (Nr JCS 84681), June 29, 1950, Truman Library, [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-3-19.pdf#zoom=100](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-3-19.pdf#zoom=100) (accessed January 11, 2012), 1.

<sup>13</sup>82 (1950). Resolution of 25 June 1950, in United Nations Security Council Resolutions online database, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/064/95/IMG/NR006495.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed January 25, 2012).

<sup>14</sup>83 (1950). Resolution of 27 June 1950, in United Nations Security Council Resolutions online database, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/064/97/IMG/NR006497.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed January 25, 2012).

the core of the United Nations Command (UNC). General MacArthur acted as Commander In Chief UNC (CINCUNC).

The hasty deployment of elements of Eighth Army proved unable to halt the NKPA. After a lengthy withdrawal of Eighth Army, it occupied a defensive perimeter to retain the port of Pusan.<sup>15</sup> On July 13, 1950, General Walker personally took command of Eighth Army from his Headquarters at Taejon and established operational control over the remaining ROK army to lead the withdrawal to and defense of the Pusan perimeter.<sup>16</sup> Even before the United States committed large contingents of troops, General MacArthur decided upon an amphibious landing somewhere in the rear of the NKPA to cut the lines of communications (LOCs).<sup>17</sup> General MacArthur requested specialized troops for an amphibious landing as of July 2, 1950.<sup>18</sup> On August 6, 1950 General Doyle O. Hickey, the Deputy Chief of Staff of FEC, informed General Walker and his key staff members of the plan for Operation Chromite. General Walker agreed on the general concept, although there was some skepticism amongst his key staff members.<sup>19</sup> General MacArthur planned and prepared Operation Chromite to commence on September 15, 1950. After some friction between General MacArthur and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the latter approved the operation on September 8, 1950.<sup>20</sup> General MacArthur's operation order number 01 tasked

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<sup>15</sup>Addington, *The Patterns of War Since The Eighteenth Century*, 272.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 139.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*; General MacArthur requested a Marines RCT and 1,200 operators for amphibious landing crafts.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>20</sup>Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South of the Naktong North to the Yalu*, 495.

General Walker to start breaking out of the perimeter one day after the landing of X Corps near Inchon.<sup>21</sup>

The landing of X Corps near Inchon was successful, but Eighth Army did not manage to break out on D+1.<sup>22</sup> The effect of the landing in the NKPA's rear, and cutting of its lines of communications did not have an instantaneous effect. This prevented General Walker from breaking out immediately. On September 23, 1950, the NKPA attack on Pusan broke down, allowing General Walker to break out of the perimeter, and start his advance to envelop large NKPA formations.<sup>23</sup> On September 27, 1950, the first elements of General Walker's Eighth Army and General Edward M. Almond's X Corps linked up north of Osan.<sup>24</sup>

With the NKPA defeated south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, the strategic question of the next step in the conflict arose. Both civilian and military advisers presented their view on the crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel to President Truman. With the bulk of the NKPA defeated and trapped south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, the civilian advisers gave the advice not to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>25</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff however, made the argument that the NKPA was not destroyed, and that the North Korean leader, Kim Il Sung, had not yet sued for peace. Therefore, their advice was to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and finish the job.<sup>26</sup> Possible intervention of the Soviet Union or the People's

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<sup>21</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 152.; Op Order No 01 GHQ, UNC 30 August 1950.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>23</sup>Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South of the Naktong North to the Yalu*, 571.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 597.

<sup>25</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 179.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

Republic of China formed a major concern for President Truman.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime, the United Nations had also deliberated the issue of crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution allowing UNC to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel to restore peace and security throughout a unified Korea.<sup>28</sup>

### Focus of this Monograph

The main research question for this monograph is: what was the difference between General Walker's suggested operational approach and General MacArthur's directed operational approach for the final defeat of North Korea, after crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel?

The monograph answers this research question by first analyzing the operational experiences of both General MacArthur and General Walker prior to the Korean War. The monograph then focuses on operational approaches of both General MacArthur and General Walker, and how they differed from each other. The monograph will end with a comparison of both and conclusions.

The monograph knows some limitations. It has a land warfare focus. It does not go into detail of the organization of amphibious landings themselves. The monograph only addresses the naval and air perspective if it is relevant to answering the before mentioned research question. A final limitation lies with General MacArthur. This monograph only looks at General MacArthur's operational approach as it applies to Korea proper. It does not look at General MacArthur's operational or strategic approach in the entire area of responsibility of Far East Command.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 178.

<sup>28</sup>Addington, *The Patterns of War Since The Eighteenth Century*, 273.

### Review of existing research

Compared to World War II and the Vietnam War, the Korean War is less researched. This is particularly true for the subject of operational art. The available literature has other focus areas. The known researched areas include the dismissal of General MacArthur in 1951 by President Truman. This civil military relationship is widely debated in multiple publications. General Matthew B. Ridgway, for example, addressed the topic in his book, *The Korean War*. In chapter six of that book General Ridgway gives his views on the matter.<sup>29</sup>

Next to the dismissal of General MacArthur, Operation Chromite is widely researched. This research includes the question whether the operation was a brilliant operational approach or merely a gamble that turned out to be successful. Author Charles M. Province addresses this issue in his book, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*. Author Russell H. S. Stolfi researches to what extent the ground assault of Eighth Army to link up with the landing forces near Inchon was successful.<sup>30</sup>

The choices that General MacArthur made about the command structure that he used, is another debated topic. In his article, “To the Yalu and Back”, author Stanlis D. Milkowski, discusses the peculiar command structure between General MacArthur, General Walker, and General Almond; and how it contributed to the disaster after the Chinese intervention.<sup>31</sup> Author Charles M. Province addresses this issue in his book, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea* from the perspective of General Walker. He argues that the command structure was

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<sup>29</sup>Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1967), 141.

<sup>30</sup>Russell H. S. Stolfi, “A Critique of Pure Success: Inchon Revisited, Revised, and Contrasted,” *The Journal of Military History*, 68 (2004): 505

<sup>31</sup>Stanlis D. Milkowski, “To the Yalu and Back,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring, Summer (2001): 2.

one element that contributed to a rift between General Walker and General Almond.<sup>32</sup> Next to the command relationships within the UNC, another general topic is the misinterpretation of the intelligence. This misinterpretation allowed the Chinese to surprise the UNC forces. This is debated in a Princeton University, published study, *Security Study 19*, no.2 by Alexander Ovodenko.<sup>33</sup>

Focusing more on General Walker, there is limited research done previously. Previously researched topics are General Walker's plan for the training of Eighth Army. Major Adam W Hilburgh addressed this subject in his monograph, "General Walton H. Walker: A Talent for Training" in 2011. In a strategic studies project for the U.S. Army War College in 2001, Lieutenant Colonel Dean A. Nowowiejski researched the influence of General George S. Patton on General Walker.<sup>34</sup> This study however does not address General Walker's use of operational art. It has a strategic leadership focus, and is limited to the timeframe of the Pusan perimeter defense.

Closest to the research topic of this monograph is a thesis from the Joint Military Intelligence College. In his thesis, "Failure of Intelligence or Failure of Leadership: Walton Walker and the Eighth Army "Bug Out" of December 1950", Major Joseph Donalbain discusses Eighth Army's retreat after the Chinese intervention.<sup>35</sup> Although this thesis covers operations

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<sup>32</sup>Charles M. Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea* (Charleston, SC: CMP Productions, 2010), 92.

<sup>33</sup>Alexander Ovodenko, "(Miss)interpreting Threats: A Case Study of the Korean War," *Security Studies 19*, no. 2 (April–June 2007): 254–286.

<sup>34</sup>Dean A. Nowowiejski, "Comrades In Arms: The Influence Of George S. Patton On Walton H. Walker's Pusan Perimeter Defense" (Strategic Research Project Carlisle; U.S. Army War College, 2011), 1.

<sup>35</sup>Joseph Donalbain, "Failure of Intelligence of Failure of Leadership: Walton Walker and the Eighth Army "Bug Out" of December 1950" (MS Thesis, Washington D.C.: Joint Military Intelligence College, 2006), 2.

north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, it focussesfocuses on the choices made at a time that the forces under UNC reached their most northern position. The main area is intelligence related. This differs from the research question in this monograph. This monograph focuses on the operational approach of General MacArthur and General Walker for the advance to the north, not what happened once the Chinese intervened.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING THE OPERATIONAL APPROACHES

In order to comprehend the operational approaches that both General MacArthur and Walker envisioned for crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, it is necessary to look at other factors that shaped their decisions. The combination of previous experiences at high-level command in war combined with other factors influenced their conception of operational art. This section is not intended to provide an in depth psychological study, but merely a sketch of both personalities, and how those personalities and their earlier operational experiences influenced their conception of operational art. Previous combat and command experiences are of value for performance as commanders at higher levels. This experience allows an officer to understand and realize the consequences of his command decisions for subordinates. It also allows the officer to develop a certain appreciation for time and space involved in operations. Finally, previous experiences enable intuitive decision-making.<sup>36</sup>

### General MacArthur

The enemy garrisons which have been bypassed in the Solomons and New Guinea represent no menace to current or future operations. Their capacity for organized offensive effort has passed

— General Staff GHQ, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific: Volume I*

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<sup>36</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, Mission Command* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 2012), 2-8.



The influence of previous experiences of General MacArthur was largely based on the interplay of his personality and his actual operational experiences in both world wars, and as viceroy of Japan.

General MacArthur grew up in a military family. Next to Douglas MacArthur's own ambition and drive, both his father and mother also affected his military career. General MacArthur's father, General Arthur MacArthur Jr., had a successful military career. He served during the Philippine's insurrection in 1898-99, reaching the highest military position.<sup>37</sup> After leaving the Philippines, his father continued to serve as one of America's top generals. This not only provided Douglas MacArthur insight into the life of a general, but also into high military society as a whole. Young Douglas MacArthur had an enormous drive to excel. This drive enabled him to finish as the top student in the United States Military Academy class of 1903.<sup>38</sup> After his father passed away, his mother would still influence his military career. Because of General Arthur MacArthur's career, his mother, Mary Pinkney, was well known among the top military establishment. This allowed her to discuss future postings for Douglas MacArthur.<sup>39</sup> By actively engaging generals that had served under her late husband, she managed to shape Douglas MacArthur's postings in an attempt to set the young officer up for success.

During World War I Douglas MacArthur joined the contingent that went to Europe. During this time, he rapidly rose in rank and served as the chief of staff of the 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division. Although he was chief of staff, he de facto commanded the division in

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<sup>37</sup>Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and the Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 21.

<sup>38</sup>Stanley Weintraub, *15 Stars: Eisenhower, MacArthur, Marshall: Three Generals who Saved the American Century* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 116.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 88.

France.<sup>40</sup> Douglas MacArthur was successful during World War I. He became the most decorated U.S. officer during World War I for his courageous conduct.<sup>41</sup> He achieved the rank of Brigadier General, and was one of the few officers allowed to retain their wartime rank after the war.

After World War I, General MacArthur had a successful military career that took him all the way to the position of Chief of Staff of the Army in 1932.<sup>42</sup> General MacArthur retired after holding that position. As a retired General, MacArthur went to the Philippine to assist the local government to reform the Philippine army. During that period, with World War II looming, President Roosevelt re-activated General MacArthur. During World War II MacArthur held a successful command of the South West Pacific Area (SWPA). With the defeat of Japan looming, this command evolved into the Strategic Command Allied Powers, established on August 14, 1945.<sup>43</sup> In that position, General MacArthur was the Viceroy of Japan. This meant that he effectively ruled Japan. Secretary of State Dean Acheson even remarked that General MacArthur dictated the occupation of Japan.<sup>44</sup>

During his successful career, General MacArthur became known as an interesting personality. He was keenly aware of and worried about his own personal image. It sometimes seemed as if General MacArthur was always on 'stage' and loved the attention.<sup>45</sup> General

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 119.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 52

<sup>43</sup>General Staff GHQ, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific: Volume I*, Center of Military History reprint (Washington D.C.: Government Printing office, 1994), 67.

<sup>44</sup>Weintraub, *15 Stars*, 377.

<sup>45</sup>D. Clayton James, *The Years Of MacArthur: Volume II, 1941-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), 21.

MacArthur had a liberal relationship with the press. He felt comfortable dealing with the press, and used the media to get his version of the truth out to the public.<sup>46</sup> He deliberately used photographers and journalists to shape his public image. During the campaign in New Guinea, General MacArthur visited the front in order to refurbish his image as a fighting general.<sup>47</sup> This demonstrated his worries about his image. General MacArthur considered himself a successful man, and was able to portray that image to the world.

The military commands that General MacArthur held later in his military career balanced on the divide between policy and strategy. Both his position in the Philippines before the war and Japan after the war brought him to the highest level. This meant that General MacArthur was familiar with statecraft, and often had to practice it himself. His senior positions required him to have an opinion regarding the balance between policy and strategy. General MacArthur developed those opinions and was not afraid of voicing them.<sup>48</sup> General MacArthur's political sensitivity affected his military judgment. He always considered the political implications of a certain course of action, often mixing political and military objectives. Two examples of this stand out. The first example was the discussion between the Joint Chiefs of Staff, War Department, Admiral Chester Nimitz, and General MacArthur about the question of whether to bypass Luzon in 1944. General MacArthur's argument for not bypassing the Philippines revolved partly around the fact that it simply was U.S. territory. In his eyes that meant that bypassing it would be seen as a political debacle.<sup>49</sup> The second example was Operation Chromite during the

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<sup>46</sup>Weintraub, *15 Stars*, 148.

<sup>47</sup>Clayton James, *The Years Of MacArthur: Volume II*, 384.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>49</sup>Robert Ross Smith, *United States Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific: Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1961), 15.

Korean War. General MacArthur developed that approach not only to envelop the NKPA, but also because it allowed the recapture of Seoul, allowing the return of the legitimate government of the Republic of Korea.<sup>50</sup>

His continued success, combined with his public image, made General MacArthur a celebrity.<sup>51</sup> This reflected on his command style in a couple of ways. He had a distanced relationship with his staff.<sup>52</sup> Internal to his staff it meant that staff officers did not have easy access to the general, and did not speak up against him. Externally it meant that his fellow senior generals made a mockery out of General MacArthur's command style. General Marshall had even stated that his colleague did not have a staff but a court.<sup>53</sup> His image, military successes, and his seniority meant that there were almost no equals of General MacArthur. It made General MacArthur untouchable.<sup>54</sup> The only equal he had during World War II was General Marshall. The rest of the commanders, especially during the Korean War, were of a younger generation.

Next to his interesting personality, his operational experience influenced the way General MacArthur looked at the conduct of warfare. Particularly his elaborate experience during World War II against Japan shaped his view. This experience started with the defense of the Philippines. Shortly before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, General MacArthur had devised a new operational approach for the defense of the island of Luzon. He requested permission from the

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<sup>50</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 149.

<sup>51</sup>Clayton James, *The Years Of MacArthur: Volume II*, 33.

<sup>52</sup>Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips, *Historical Perspective of the Operational Art* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2007), 422.

<sup>53</sup>Weintraub, *15 Stars*, xiii.

<sup>54</sup>Michael R. Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy: American Operational Art to 1945* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 233.

War Department to change War Plan Orange.<sup>55</sup> General MacArthur preferred the combined U.S. and Philippine forces to make a stand on the potential landing beaches, in case of Japanese attack. In reality, General MacArthur's forces lacked both the quality and quantity to execute a successful beach defense.<sup>56</sup> This proved to be the case after Japanese forces invaded Luzon. General MacArthur ordered a retreat in order to establish a new defensive line on the Bataan Peninsula.<sup>57</sup> While the defense of Bataan was slowly failing, General MacArthur had to report to Australia in order to organize the overall defense of British, Dutch, Australian, and U.S. forces. He and his family reached Australia after an eleven-day journey.<sup>58</sup> During that timeframe, the Combined Chiefs of Staff established South West Pacific command. The Combined Chiefs chose General MacArthur to command the newly established supreme command.<sup>59</sup> His first priority became the defense of Papua New Guinea, in an attempt to prevent any further progress of the Japanese offensive.

General MacArthur attempted to build the combined combat power of Australian and U.S. forces, while containing the Japanese bridgeheads already in place on New Guinea. The operational question that General MacArthur faced was how to turn the defensive into a successful offensive. This turn materialized after a successful defeat of Japanese forces in Milne Bay, east New Guinea, in September 1942. The Australian forces were able to slowly clear the

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<sup>55</sup>Clayton James, *The Years Of MacArthur: Volume II*, 26.

<sup>56</sup>GHQ, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific: Volume I*, 6.

<sup>57</sup>Clayton James, *The Years Of MacArthur: Volume II*, 29.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>59</sup>Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 205.

established Japanese strongholds.<sup>60</sup> In that same period, early 1943, General MacArthur engaged with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in order to be augmented with an amphibious group, so his future options would include amphibious assaults as well. General MacArthur's opening battles on New Guinea coincided with the operations to regain control of Guadalcanal in the adjacent South Pacific Area. This operation combined with General MacArthur's perception of inter-service sensitivities drove MacArthur to step up offensive operations on New Guinea. He did not want to command the sideshow.<sup>61</sup>

General MacArthur was fighting more than just the Japanese forces following the Arcadia conference in Washington D.C.<sup>62</sup> During that conference both the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and the U.S. President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, decided on what became known as the Germany first strategy.<sup>63</sup> As of that moment, General MacArthur basically fought a string of strategic decisions. First, General MacArthur had a strong opinion on the Germany first strategy. General MacArthur had no problem letting the world know, between the lines, that he believed this was wrong. In August 1942, General Marshall sent a message to General MacArthur stating that he was under the impression that General MacArthur was disagreeing on the overall strategy. General Marshall let him know that he was aware of his opinion and that his attempts to undermine the strategy had to stop.<sup>64</sup> On September 25, 1942, General Henry H. Arnold visited the SWPA commander as a representative of the Joint Chiefs. He noted that General MacArthur

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<sup>60</sup>Weintraub, *15 Stars*, 127.

<sup>61</sup>Clayton James, *The Years Of MacArthur: Volume II*, 208.

<sup>62</sup>Philip A. Crowl, *U.S. Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific: Campaign in the Marianas* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1959), 9.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 216.

insisted that it would be impossible to start a second front out of Great Britain. This showed General MacArthur's real opinion.<sup>65</sup>

The next strategic decision that General MacArthur questioned was the divided command structure in the Pacific. General MacArthur stressed the importance of a unified strategy for the Pacific, in his radio report to the War Department on October 7, 1942.<sup>66</sup> Obviously, the War Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff understood the principle of unified command. However, the inter-service rivalry made this an unworkable situation.<sup>67</sup> General MacArthur had informed General Marshall more than once that the U.S. Navy tried to steal the show in the Pacific. General Marshall responded in a telegram, informing General MacArthur that success in the Pacific theater depended on cooperation.<sup>68</sup> The matter of a unified command would surface multiple times in the media, and would not be solved according to General MacArthur's satisfaction until the creation of the Strategic Command Allied Powers at the end of the war.

The next argument in the trail of disagreement was the question about the next step within the strategy to defeat Japan. In March 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed both the SWPA Command and the Pacific Oceans Area Command to prepare for the next step.<sup>69</sup> Admiral Nimitz had to prepare operations against Formosa, and General MacArthur had to prepare an assault into the Philippines. Although this was what General MacArthur had always wanted, the directive was not conclusive on the actual invasion of Luzon itself. For General MacArthur,

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 211.

<sup>66</sup>GHQ, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific: Volume I*, 81.

<sup>67</sup>Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 206.

<sup>68</sup>Weintraub, *15 Stars*, 136.

<sup>69</sup>Smith, *U.S. Army In World War II: The War in the Pacific: Triumph in the Philippines*, 6.

obsessed with a return to the Philippines since his defeat there, there ought to be no question about a possible return to Luzon.<sup>70</sup> Eventually General MacArthur won the argument, and the liberation of Luzon was included.

His final argument was over the lack of resources. General MacArthur was not satisfied with the amount of resources at his disposal. Until major U.S. formations became available to General MacArthur, his command depended primarily on Australian ground forces. Although the preponderance of the actual ground fighting in the early stages of the campaign in New Guinea was executed by the Australians, General MacArthur was not impressed by the fighting skills of the Australian allies.<sup>71</sup> The Germany first decision only convinced General MacArthur more that General Marshall was only trying to ruin his career.<sup>72</sup> The competing demands with other parts of the Pacific made matters worse.<sup>73</sup> General Henry H. Arnold, after his visit characterized General MacArthur in his diary as a man that was incapable of seeing matters beyond his own theater. He called General MacArthur a brilliant mind frustrated by the fact that he could not execute his obsessed plan.<sup>74</sup>

After SWPA received its own amphibious group in March 1943, General MacArthur could finally develop an operational approach for locally defeating Japanese forces, and closing in on Japan in general and the Philippines in particular.<sup>75</sup> During the operations on New Guinea, a

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<sup>70</sup>GHQ, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific: Volume I*, 166.

<sup>71</sup>Clayton James, *The Years Of MacArthur: Volume II*, 209.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>73</sup>Weintraub, *15 Stars*, 116.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>75</sup>GHQ, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific: Volume I*, 105.



pattern started to develop. General MacArthur always operated under the umbrella of his land based Fifth Air Force. The limit of this air umbrella impacted the selection of the next decisive point. There were two factors affecting the selection of these decisive points. First, the location needed to have, or allow the construction of, an airfield. Second, the location could not be an enemy strongpoint. General MacArthur preferred attacking where “they ain’t.”<sup>76</sup> This decisive point would then form the objective for the next leap, opening with an amphibious assault, followed by clearing of the local area. This allowed the Seabees to start the creation of proper docking facilities and the engineers to quickly establish or restore an airfield. This newly established airfield was then used to fly in supplies. As soon as possible, the airfield would host a fighter element, to safeguard the dominance in the skies. This in turn allowed General MacArthur to shift his air umbrella farther forward. By employing this approach, MacArthur was able to cut off and isolate large bodies of enemy troops. The loss of Japan’s ability to reinforce and maintain all those pockets immobilized large numbers of Japanese troops in those pockets.<sup>77</sup> This approach allowed U.S. forces to close in on the mainland of Japan itself.

After the successful clearing of the direct area surrounding the amphibious landing area, General MacArthur often issued a communiqué declaring a dazzling victory. These statements were controversial. The information was often incorrect.<sup>78</sup> For his troops, the communiqués were often too premature. It always pretended that the job was done, while the whole mopping up was still to come. It downplayed the dangerous mopping up operations. For General MacArthur’s colleagues his communiqués also created controversy. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and Admiral

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<sup>76</sup>Clayton James, *The Years Of MacArthur: Volume II*, 335.

<sup>77</sup>GHQ, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific: Volume I*, 59.

<sup>78</sup>Clayton James, *The Years Of MacArthur: Volume II*, 277.

Nimitz thought that they contained too much delicate information.<sup>79</sup> According to them, the communiqués violated operational security. After the successful conclusion of the New Guinea campaign, mopping up not included, General MacArthur used a similar approach for his operations in the Philippines. Successively seizing areas in Leyte, Mindoro, and eventually Luzon from October 20, 1944 onwards. Apart from the actual liberation of Manila, all the phases and objectives on the separate islands had to do with the seizure and establishment of airfields as bases of operations for the next step.<sup>80</sup> At the end of World War II General MacArthur had established a pattern of operations that aimed on closing in on Japan. The availability of air cover decided the limit of the movements. The establishment of airbases formed the main consideration, and was more important than the actual defeat of the entire enemy forces present on the islands along the approach to Japan. In the end, the fight with Japanese forces on mainland Japan never happened because of the Japanese surrender.

The first offensive during the Korean War was similar to the operations that General MacArthur had conducted during World War II. The amphibious assault during Operation Chromite successfully liberated Seoul and Kimpo Airfield, even though both General Walker and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were very skeptical about its chance for success. This enormous success made General MacArthur even more untouchable than he already was. It portrayed to the American public that General MacArthur had a perfect grasp of the Korean War, apparently better than the military and civilian leadership in Washington D.C.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Smith, *U.S. Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific: Triumph in the Philippines*, 18.

<sup>81</sup>Cole C. Kingseed, "Fall from Grace: The Parallel Careers Of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur And MG George B. McClellan," *Army* (November 2012): 57.

Overall General MacArthur's operational experiences, particularly those of World War II, can be characterized as an enemy bypassing, terrain-oriented approach. This allowed his forces to close in on mainland of Japan. The selection of follow-on objectives hinged on the absence of strong enemy forces, and the possibility to establish an airfield. This terrain-oriented approach enabled the extension of the reach of air support. If the opportunity presented itself, General MacArthur would use political implications to guide the selection of the next objective.

#### General Walker

General Walker's service record covered experiences at different levels of command during two World Wars. Similar to many other officers of his generation, General Walker had a lot of experience in training and preparation of units for combat. By the time General Walker took command of Eighth Army in Japan in September 1948, he had a clear conception on training of army units.<sup>82</sup> He believed in a phased approach, progressing training with increments from individual level through all the organizational levels up through Army level training.<sup>83</sup> Realism, physical fitness, combined arms, and ground air integration played vital roles in his training philosophy.<sup>84</sup> General Walker was convinced that leadership involvement formed the key to success in battle.<sup>85</sup> For General Walker this was not only true in battle but also during training.

After his assumption of command of Eighth Army, General Walker tried to change the mentality of occupation duty to readiness for combat.<sup>86</sup> In order to put this process in motion

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<sup>82</sup>Hilburgh, "General Walton H. Walker," 43.

<sup>83</sup>Thomas E. Hanson, "The 8<sup>th</sup> Army's Combat Readiness Before Korea: A New Appraisal," *Armed Forces & Society*, 29, No 2 (2003): 169.

<sup>84</sup>Hilburgh, "General Walton H. Walker," 44.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Hanson, "The 8<sup>th</sup> Army's Combat Readiness Before Korea", 168.

General Walker published “Training Directive Number Four” on April 15, 1949.<sup>87</sup> This directive assumed that the overall proficiency of replacement soldiers was nonexistent and even allowed the hiring of locals for housekeeping duties to enable maximum participation of military personnel.<sup>88</sup> As a result of this change in duty mentality, Eighth Army units were trained up to the battalion level prior to the outbreak of the Korean War.<sup>89</sup> With unit training unfinished prior to the war, General Walker continued to seize every opportunity to educate and train his forces. He even did this personally during his frequent visits to the troops at the front.<sup>90</sup> This method had become a personal trait of him during World War II.<sup>91</sup>

It is often suggested that General Patton and General Walker had a special mentor relationship, and that General Walker idolized his former commander. The special character of war makes it reasonable to some extent to suggest that General Walker’s experience as commander of XX Corps under General Patton shaped and influenced him. Whether General Patton really mentored General Walker remains hard to prove.<sup>92</sup> General Patton’s aversion for “fat” officers initially even strained their relationship.<sup>93</sup> This changed after General Patton saw General Walker perform as one of his corps commanders.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 169.

<sup>89</sup>Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South of the Naktong North to the Yalu*, 113.

<sup>90</sup>Hilburgh, “General Walton H. Walker,” 44.

<sup>91</sup>Nowowiejski, “Comrades In Arms,” 3.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

Both General Patton and General Walker held similar views on two particular fronts. In the first place, both saw the importance of leadership involvement as a vital factor for success in combat.<sup>95</sup> In practice, this meant that commanders had to be at the front frequently. This showed their fearlessness and willingness to share the same dangers of combat, boosting troop motivation.<sup>96</sup> Both generals used specific command vehicles, making them visible as the commander. Another commonality was the use of observation airplanes to reconnoiter the front and enhance situational understanding.<sup>97</sup>

General Patton developed a sincere professional admiration for General Walker. The constant demonstration of Walker's fearlessness, Walker's fighting mentality, formed the basis for this admiration.<sup>98</sup> Another aspect that Patton appreciated was the fact that General Walker "habitually obeyed" orders.<sup>99</sup> This element remained one of the character traits that impacted his future performance as commander of Eighth Army under General MacArthur. For General MacArthur and his Chief of Staff and future commander of X Corps, General Ned Almond, General Walker was a Patton boy. This fact alone was enough for some tension within Far Eastern High Command.<sup>100</sup> For General MacArthur, however, it was Walker's tendency to "habitually obey" orders, that would ensure that commander Eighth Army would not object to his suggested operational approach for Operation Chromite and the crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

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<sup>95</sup>Hilburgh, "General Walton H. Walker," 44.

<sup>96</sup>Nowowiejski, "Comrades In Arms," 14.

<sup>97</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 159.

<sup>98</sup>Nowowiejski, "Comrades In Arms," 10.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 93.

During World War II, General Walker served as commander XX Corps. Two specific experiences during his command of XX Corps influenced his judgment as commander of Eighth Army. The failed attempt to envelop a large German force in the Falaise Pocket in 1944 was the first of the two specific experiences. In this instance, the Allied forces proved unable to close the gap completing the envelopment.<sup>101</sup> This allowed large bodies of German units to escape the entrapment.<sup>102</sup> This meant that the envelopment in fact turned into a large turning movement. To General Walker this demonstrated that it is very difficult to execute a full envelopment successfully, especially if it is executed on a grand scale.<sup>103</sup> Attempted at a large scale, it takes time for the enemy to experience the consequences of a deep enveloping movement. The only thing that the enemy force experiences right away is of a psychological nature. It is the awareness of being cut off.<sup>104</sup> It is very unlikely that the forces remain passive and do not attempt to counter the envelopment, as the Germans did.<sup>105</sup> This turned the whole ordeal into a race for the gap, in which the accurate arrangement of tactical actions proved very difficult. Simply bypassing the enemy is not enough to ensure the success of this type of maneuver.

The failed closure of the Falaise pocket influenced the way General Walker viewed General MacArthur's plan for the amphibious landing at Inchon.<sup>106</sup> General Walker was more convinced that the plan was driven by political reasons more than operational reasons as well as

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<sup>101</sup>Martin Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II: European Theatre of Operations, Breakout and Pursuit* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), 525.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, 558.

<sup>103</sup>Carl von Clausewitz edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, *On War* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 214.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*, 347.

<sup>106</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 96.

the personal drive for credit for his superior.<sup>107</sup> Walker himself was not immediately impressed, and certainly not by General MacArthur's dramatic way in which he presented his plan.<sup>108</sup> Planned more than 180 miles behind the enemy front, Walker believed that the proposed landing was an example of envelopment at a grand scale, with limited chance of success. He was convinced that the impact on the enemy would be limited, and that it would take a long while before the enemy suffered the consequences of the landing in their rear.<sup>109</sup> For this reason, General Walker favored a landing near Kunsan. General Joseph L. Collins, Chief of Staff of the US. Army, met with General Walker, during one of his trips to Korea and expressed the same opinion.<sup>110</sup> The exact timing and sequencing of the arranged tactical actions would be extremely hard to do.<sup>111</sup> Even if the timing was correct, Eighth Army still lacked essential equipment to conduct river crossings of the Nakdong River, because of the logistical priority given to X Corps.<sup>112</sup> General Walker was not the only one with doubts about the impact of the Inchon landing. Key members within his staff shared his view. However, due to the lack of an appropriate moment to raise his objections to General MacArthur, or perhaps, Walker's trait of habitually obeying orders, he agreed on the concept for the operation.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 155.

<sup>108</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 95.

<sup>109</sup>Allan R. Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came From The North* (Lawrence KS.: Kansas University Press, 2005), 268.

<sup>110</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 97.

<sup>111</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 174.

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, 145.

It took a week before the NKPA started to break down during the execution of Operation Chromite.<sup>114</sup> It is uncertain whether the decrease in NKPA resistance around the Pusan perimeter was a result of the landing at Inchon, or because of the relentless pressure of Fifth Air Force in combination with Eighth Army.<sup>115</sup> After Eighth Army crossed the Naktong River, it managed to encircle some pockets of NKPA troops, however, Operation Chromite had turned into more of a turning movement rather than a 180 mile deep envelopment.<sup>116</sup>

The second specific experience influencing General Walker's judgment as commander of Eighth Army were the consequences of overstretched logistical lines. General Patton's Third Army had outrun his supply lines after the successful breakout in Normandy in 1944. Supply shortages, especially fuel, forced General Patton to assume the defensive in late August, 1944.<sup>117</sup> Here General Walker experienced the impact of supply shortages on a sustained offensive.<sup>118</sup> This supply situation also impacted the chance of a successful defense after culmination. During his command of Eighth Army in Korea, he would not only witness similar tactical situations, but also be involved in discussions on their feasibility, either within his own staff or with General MacArthur.

During the entire period of the Korean War, Eighth Army was the only active army in Far East Command. As a consequence, Eighth Army had the responsibilities of a theater army. This

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<sup>114</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 270.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>116</sup>Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953* (New York, NY.: Times Books, 1987), 318.

<sup>117</sup>Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II*, 669.

<sup>118</sup>Nowowiejski, "Comrades In Arms," 12.



meant that General Walker had more concerns beyond just winning the fight in South Korea.<sup>119</sup> beside to commanding the operation in Korea, General Walker had substantial reception, training, and logistical responsibilities.

In its organic establishment, Eighth Army had four understrength divisions without a corps headquarters.<sup>120</sup> As a consequence of the initial decision to commit ground forces, General Walker had to augment the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, stripping his remaining three divisions of scarce personnel and equipment.<sup>121</sup> This necessary decision left the three remaining divisions in an even worse state of readiness. At the same time General MacArthur was in a constant dialogue with the Joint Chiefs of Staff about further reinforcements to commit to what became known as the Pusan perimeter defense. Both General MacArthur and the Joint Chiefs of Staff tried to find a balance between partly divergent interests. For General MacArthur it was vital to receive reinforcements in order to boost the defenses. It was in his interest to receive those forces immediately. On the other hand, the Joint Chiefs of Staff tried to start the national rearmament process, in which General MacArthur's requests needed to fit.<sup>122</sup> The interests of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were a dynamic combination between rearmament for Korea and the communist threat in Europe, leading to a large demand for forces, while the process for rearmament was not yet in place. During this time General Walker's command remained responsible for the reception, integration, and transportation of those forces.<sup>123</sup> Eighth Army Chief of Staff, General Landstrum,

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<sup>119</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 86.

<sup>120</sup>Hilburgh, "General Walton H. Walker," 29.

<sup>121</sup>Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 186.

<sup>122</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 132.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, 165, 6.

controlled this process from the rear HQ in Japan, after General Walker had personally taken over command in Korea.

Another major responsibility for Eighth Army was its theater logistical responsibility. This responsibility changed over time as a result of a reorganization of Far Eastern Command by General MacArthur. Initially General Walker remained responsible for both the logistics for the operation in Korea and the sustainment of his original occupation duty in Japan. On August 24, 1950, General MacArthur decided to change both the organization and the responsibilities within FEC. He established a separate Japan Logistical Command, relieving General Walker of his occupation duties in Japan.<sup>124</sup> Although this allowed General Walker to focus more on the Pusan perimeter defense, he remained responsible for all the logistics in Korea.<sup>125</sup> However, this did not mean that General Walker was in total control of the logistical decisions in Korea.

In two cases, General MacArthur made command decisions severely affecting Eighth Army's operations. General MacArthur decided to base his operational approach largely on amphibious landings. This had consequences for the logistical priorities in the available ports. First of all, General Walker was forced to release his Marines Regimental Combat Team to augment the newly formed X Corps.<sup>126</sup> This did not only mean the loss of needed combat power for Eighth Army, but it also meant that part of the port's capacity in Pusan was not used to process Eighth Army's supplies; supplies that General Walker needed for his part of Operation

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<sup>124</sup>Billy C. Mossman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1988), 24.

<sup>125</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 127.

<sup>126</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 164.

Chromite. At that time, the overall logistical priority was clearly in favor of X Corps. The logistical priority within FEC made General Walker feel like the “bastard Child” of FEC.<sup>127</sup>

The second case concerned the amphibious landing of X Corps at Wonsan. The impact of that decision was even more severe for Eighth Army’s sustainment. General MacArthur’s decision to attempt an amphibious landing near the port of Wonsan meant that the entire X Corps had to be out loaded. Since this clogged up the only two available ports in FEC hands for the first half of October, it severely affected the build-up of necessary supplies for General Walker’s drive north.<sup>128</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division used the port of Inchon, and 7<sup>th</sup> Division used the port in Pusan. Out loading 7<sup>th</sup> Division in Pusan also meant that the entire division, personnel and equipment, had to travel against the flow of supplies through recently “liberated” territory, full of NKPA remnants. 7<sup>th</sup> Division had to fight these remnants on several occasions during their move to Pusan.<sup>129</sup>

At the time Eighth Army was positioned to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel into North Korea, General Walker’s organization included two logistical commands. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Logistical Command operated Pusan and Inchon port. Next to port operations, both commands also ran all prisoner of war facilities. General Walker’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Logistical Command at Pusan, was responsible for operating the United Nations Reception Center in Pusan.<sup>130</sup> That center handled the incoming troop contributions of various United Nations members.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 109.

<sup>128</sup>Mossman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Ebb and Flow*, 43.

<sup>129</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 207.

<sup>130</sup>Mossman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Ebb and Flow*, 28.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*, 26; These forces included three separate brigades and three separate battalions on a rotational basis.

During the offensive across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, General MacArthur decided to make Eighth Army responsible for the sustainment of X Corps.<sup>132</sup> General Walker did not receive command over X Corps but did get the responsibility for its sustainment. This third command decision complicated matters for General Walker.<sup>133</sup> Not just because of the large distance between both major commands, but also because of the strained relationship between both commanders.

The operational experiences of General Walker differed fundamentally from the experiences that General MacArthur had during World War II. The element that made it so different was the character of the operating environment. For General MacArthur the operating environment existed of a large maritime area with groups of jungle-covered islands. The capture of some of the islands were necessary to approach mainland Japan. This required neither the destruction of all Japanese forces on all of the islands, nor the full destruction of Japanese forces on the targeted islands. The bypassed enemy forces became irrelevant because of the contested sea lines of communications within the Japanese area of operations. Although irrelevant in MacArthur's eyes, it did however mean that the Australian forces were left with the mopping up. Because the fight and defeat of Japan on its own territory never took place, General MacArthur's experiences resemble an enormous approach march to get to Japan, across the South Western Pacific.

This differed fundamentally from the character of war that General Walker experienced in the European Theater of Operations. The operating environment was the contiguous battlefield of the European continent. The fundamental difference was that the bypassing of enemy forces did not automatically equate to isolation of those forces, because of the inherent mobility of ground forces on a contiguous battlefield, particularly if the bypassed forces encompassed entire

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<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>133</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 207.

formations. In this operating environment, bypassing of enemy units did not automatically render those units irrelevant on the battlefield. Therefore, General Walker experienced a kind of warfare that required the clearing of all enemy resistance to defeat Germany. This is a more methodical approach to defeating the enemy. Additionally Walker had more direct responsibility and experience, in World War II and Korea, with the problems of logistically supporting large formations.

### OPERATIONAL ART

Tactics are based on weapon-power...strategy is based on movement...movement depends on supply.

—Roy E. Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*; from: J.F.C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant*

#### Problem Statement and Center of Gravity

Before both generals could visualize their possible approaches to win to execute the next stage of the war, they first needed to identify what problem they were trying to solve. Both General MacArthur and General Walker's understanding of the problem was similar. How to destroy the NKPA to force the North Korean Government to sue for peace on terms favorable to unification of Korea?<sup>134</sup> Several factors complicated this problem. Both generals considered the remaining NKPA elements as the enemy's center of gravity. Although the NKPA lost a lot of its combat effectiveness during their attempts to eliminate the Pusan perimeter, intelligence still suggested a deliberate defense of Pyongyang.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, both approaches had a clear enemy focus.

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<sup>134</sup>Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips, *Historical Perspective of the Operational Art* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2007), 419.

<sup>135</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 204.

### General MacArthur's Operational Approach

General MacArthur had three considerations for the development of an operational approach for the next and final phase of the war. His first consideration was the Taebaek mountain range. This generally north south oriented mountain range limited the lateral movement between both coasts of the peninsula. There were only a few roads available.<sup>136</sup> General MacArthur linked the implication of this terrain factor to the question of whether or not there should be one or two commands on the peninsula.

The second consideration was the need for additional port facilities to handle the large demand of supplies for the entire force.<sup>137</sup> It was not just that the port capacity fell short of the requirement, but also the poor state of the infrastructure in the entire logistical chain. This meant that either Chinnampo on the west coast, or Wonsan on the east coast had to be seized in order to sustain the force.

The final consideration that affected General MacArthur's understanding was the question of how to bring about the final defeat of the remaining NKPA forces. For General MacArthur this meant that he believed a second attempt to envelop the NKPA forces was likely necessary.<sup>138</sup> Here General MacArthur saw a possible combination with his second consideration, while visualizing a possible operational approach.

Next to the considerations that affected his understanding of the combined problem he faced, General MacArthur also made a couple of assumptions that would drive the visualization of the possible approaches. First, that the bulk of the NKPA had already been destroyed during

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<sup>136</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 125.

<sup>137</sup>Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspective of the Operational Art*, 420.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*, 421.

the operations south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>139</sup> This meant that General MacArthur was convinced that he only needed one more push to finish the war. This coincides with the statement that General MacArthur made during the conference at Wake Island with President Harry S. Truman on October 15, 1950.<sup>140</sup> During that conference, General MacArthur insured the President that the troops would be home by Christmas. As a result of this assumption, General MacArthur and the Joint Chiefs of Staff already started to plan the redeployment of U.S. forces from Korea. The Joint Chiefs of Staff started to draft follow on guidance for the occupation, and a general election in a unified Korea.<sup>141</sup>

Second was the assumption that both the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union would not intervene. Both the military intelligence community and the Central Intelligence Agency noticed a build-up of considerable numbers of Chinese forces in Manchuria. However, the difficulty was to assess and agree on their intentions.<sup>142</sup> General MacArthur, in line with his experience to engage in policy matters, convincingly assured President Truman during the Wake conference that the Chinese would not intervene in the conflict. According to him, the communists had missed the opportunity to do so, and if they tried, they would be maimed by heavy bombardments.<sup>143</sup> This assumption was in line with the overall belief in the Joint Special Planning Operations Group of United Nations Command in Tokyo. This conviction was already

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<sup>139</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 188.

<sup>140</sup>Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 283.

<sup>141</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 219.

<sup>142</sup>Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 297.

<sup>143</sup>*Ibid.*, 283.

noted in a note from the acting Chief of Staff of the United Nations Command, General Wright, of September 26, 1950.<sup>144</sup>

The third assumption was that North Korea in its entirety was open for military action as General MacArthur saw fit.<sup>145</sup> This assumption was the result of confusion between the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General MacArthur, and the Secretary of Defense, George C. Marshall. On September 28, 1950, the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent a new directive to General MacArthur. This directive stated that only ROK forces were allowed to operate in the two most Northern provinces as a matter of policy.<sup>146</sup> When General MacArthur contacted Secretary Marshall to clarify the new directives, Secretary Marshall told General MacArthur to feel unhampered, both tactically and strategically, when operating in North Korea.<sup>147</sup> This ambiguity left room for interpretation. General MacArthur took Secretary Marshall's wider guidance as the truth. In his response to Secretary Marshall, he replied that he viewed the entire North Korean territory open for operations.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 189.

<sup>145</sup>*Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>146</sup>George C. Marshall, "George C. Marshall to Harry S. Truman, With Attached Directive to Commander of United Nations Forces in Korea, September 27, 1950," Truman Library, [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-18-3.pdf#zoom=100](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-18-3.pdf#zoom=100) (accessed December 31, 2012), 2.

<sup>147</sup>George C. Marshall, "George C. Marshall to Douglas MacArthur, September 29, 1950," Truman Library, [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-22-19.pdf#zoom=100](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-22-19.pdf#zoom=100) (accessed December 31, 2012).

<sup>148</sup>Douglas MacArthur, "Douglas MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 30," Truman Library, [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-22-18.pdf#zoom=100](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-22-18.pdf#zoom=100) (accessed December 31, 2012).



General MacArthur and his planning staff developed the operational approach based on these considerations and assumptions. The operational approach that General MacArthur visualized evolved over time, in accordance with the operational situation. The operational situation developed in two stages. The situation prior to the crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel formed the first stage. The initial operational approach that General MacArthur visualized dealt with that situation. It included the seizure of Pyongyang and the successful juncture with forces from the east coast, by the Pyongyang-Wonsan road. The second stage occurred when it became apparent that the successful execution of the operational approach did not end the war. For this reason, General MacArthur provided additional orders.

General MacArthur ordered his Joint Special Planning Operational Group to plan for an amphibious operation north of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel on September 26, 1950. He provided two broad options for the group to work out. The first option was an amphibious assault on the West side of the Taebaek Mountains to seize Chinnampo. Eighth Army was to attack and seize Pyongyang. The second option took place on the east side of the Taebaek Mountains. In this option, the amphibious assault was aimed at the seizure of Wonsan. This option was also supported by an attack of Eighth Army, but on the east side of the maintain range.<sup>149</sup> As an alternative to the two provided options, the Chief of Staff, General Wright, developed an option that contained a combination of both options on the next day.<sup>150</sup> This option envisioned an amphibious assault to seize Wonsan combined with an Eighth Army attack to seize Pyongyang. The fact that the planning group had conducted site studies in the preparation of Operation Chromite enabled the development of this option in just a day.<sup>151</sup> General MacArthur favored this operational approach,

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<sup>149</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 187.

<sup>150</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup>*Ibid.*

and selected it to become the next step in his campaign. On September 28, 1950, he informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff about his intention to execute this approach in a telex message.<sup>152</sup>

The operational approach that General MacArthur selected was a three-phased operation in order to envelop and destroy the remaining NKPA forces south of the Pyongyang-Wonsan road. The Eighth Army attack to seize Pyongyang formed phase one. Eighth Army was to attack with the bulk of its army west of the Taebaek Mountain range.<sup>153</sup> In order to have a proper sequencing of tactical action, this attack had to commence three to seven days prior to the actual amphibious assault by X Corps.<sup>154</sup> The amphibious assault itself formed phase two.<sup>155</sup> This phase had to seize and secure Wonsan as a base of operations. The actions of X Corps had to coincide with the attack of I ROK Corps, as part of Eighth Army, on the east side of the Taebaek Mountain range. Phase three consisted of X Corps' drive in a westerly direction to envelop the remnants of the NKPA south of the Pyongyang-Wonsan road. After a successful juncture of X Corps with Eighth Army, phase four would mop up the remaining resistance, and occupy the area south of the Chongju-Yongwon-Huhnam line. ROK forces would be the only forces allowed north of that line.<sup>156</sup> General MacArthur acknowledged that his forces would be at the end of their operational reach after the execution of this approach. The eventual operations of the ROK forces farther north would be extremely difficult to sustain.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>Douglas H. MacArthur, "Douglas MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 28, 1950," [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-22-16.pdf#zoom=100](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-22-16.pdf#zoom=100) (accessed December 31, 2012).

<sup>153</sup>Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South of the Nakdong North to the Yalu*, 275.

<sup>154</sup>*Ibid.*, 611.

<sup>155</sup>Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 275.

<sup>156</sup>MacArthur, "Douglas MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 28, 1950."

<sup>157</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 191.

On September 28, 1950, General MacArthur informed the Joint Chiefs about his intentions. He planned to start the execution of his plans between October 15 and October 30, 1950.<sup>158</sup> President Truman and Secretary Marshall both agreed with the plan, and instructed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to give General MacArthur the appropriate orders to execute.<sup>159</sup> After successful completion of this operational approach, the final resistance of the NKPA would be broken.

The approach depended on the establishment of an additional base of operation east of the Taebaek Mountain range, in line with General MacArthur's considerations. The sustainment of the bulk of Eighth Army on the west side of the mountain range depended on the clearing of the port of Chinnampo. These two additional bases needed to augment the two ports, Pusan and Inchon, already in use. In the event of phase four, this would be vital to prevent culmination, especially of the ROK forces, operating further north. Next to the bases, the approach identified three separate lines of operations. The main effort was Eighth Army's attack along the line of operation west of the mountain range with Kumchon as a decisive point. At this point Eighth Army had to cross the Yesong River. The elements of Eighth Army east of the Taebaek Mountains would operate along an eastern line of operation. Yangyang and Kojo formed the decisive points along this line of operation. For X Corps the line of operation ran perpendicular to the lines of operation for Eighth Army. The port facility of Wonsan, the objective for phase two, and Yangdok formed the decisive points on that line of operation. All decisive points dealt with either the crossing of a river, or were local villages, interdicting likely routes of retreat for the NKPA.

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<sup>158</sup>MacArthur, "Douglas MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 28, 1950."

<sup>159</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 195.

General MacArthur's operational approach also included one risk. This risk involved the sequencing of the tactical actions. If the sequencing of phases one and two failed, the whole approach would likely fail to envelop the remaining NKPA elements. This meant that General MacArthur would have to turn his approach into a pursuit of the NKPA further north. The opportunity, however, was that General MacArthur's approach would likely break the last resistance, and win the war.

The execution of the approach did not go as planned and did not reach the envisioned endstate. The sequencing of the tactical action as planned was not executed according to plan. In his correspondence with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General MacArthur pointed out that he did not want to start the offensive into North Korea prior to October 15, 1950.<sup>160</sup> General MacArthur had picked this date so that X Corps had time to out load its divisions in both Pusan and Inchon, and that Eighth Army had time to prepare logistically for the drive north. However, on October 1, 1950, the 1<sup>st</sup> ROK Corps crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel into North Korea.<sup>161</sup> Located on the east side of the peninsula, this corps started its drive towards Wonsan. This early start risked the proper sequencing of actions. 1<sup>st</sup> ROK Corps only met light resistance, and seized Wonsan on October 10, 1950, more than a week prior to the arrival of X Corps elements.<sup>162</sup> At that time, X Corps had not even completed their embarkation to start its journey to get to the Wonsan area.<sup>163</sup> This meant that once more the attempt to envelop the remaining NKPA resistance did not materialize. Next to

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<sup>160</sup>MacArthur, "Douglas MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 28, 1950," <http://www.trumanlibrary.org>.

<sup>161</sup>Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 277.

<sup>162</sup>Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong North to the Yalu*, 618.

<sup>163</sup>Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 282.

that, the loss of Pyongyang as the seat of government also did not force the North Koreans to sue for peace.

With 1<sup>st</sup> ROK Corps in Wonsan and Eighth Army closing in on Pyongyang, General MacArthur gave orders that established a new boundary between both commands.<sup>164</sup> Thereby deciding to not have 1<sup>st</sup> ROK Corps execute the attack in a westerly direction and close in with the main force of Eighth Army, as General Walker had suggested, in an attempt to still execute the intended envelopment. The order also eliminated the restriction to only use ROK forces in the most northern parts of North Korea, as previously ordered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. On October 24, 1950, General MacArthur again issued new orders, ordering an all-out drive north with all available forces.<sup>165</sup> General MacArthur's disregard of earlier Joint Chiefs' guidance generated a response from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff reminded General MacArthur about their earlier guidance to use only ROK troops close to Manchuria. In a response, General MacArthur told the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he operated within the guidance of the Secretary of Defense, and that his orders were necessary to gain victory. After this response, the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to leave it at that.<sup>166</sup> This situation was the result of the ambiguous guidance that General MacArthur had received from Washington D.C.

One day after issuing his new order, on October 25, 1950, Chinese forces attacked elements of General Walker's Eighth Army. This came exactly ten days after the Wake Conference, and General MacArthur's persuasive answer to President Truman, that it was highly unlikely that China would intervene.

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<sup>164</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 216.

<sup>165</sup>*Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>166</sup>Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong North to the Yalu*, 670.

### General Walker's Operational Approach

Once Eighth Army linked up with X Corps, General Walker and his staff thought about a possible follow on mission to win the war. Before General Walker could start developing an approach, he first needed to understand how several factors complicated his operational approach.

General Walker also identified the terrain as a first factor to impact his approach. Although a little less mountainous on the west the remainder of the peninsula consists of mountains. The north-south direction of the Taebaek mountain range severely restricted any east-west movement. It also limited movement and maneuver to the few roads available. The terrain had very limited rail lines to facilitate the movements of troops and supplies. The few rail lines available in North Korea had suffered from the attempts by the Air Force to interdict the support to the NKPA in South Korea.<sup>167</sup> Therefore, Eighth Army had to depend on the available trucks for its sustainment, until the rail line from Seoul to Pyongyang was restored. This meant that the few roads available had to be shared for both the movement and maneuver and the sustainment, almost surely leading to congestion.

A second factor complicating the problem was the realistic chance of intervention by either the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China. Although there were no actual signs yet, the possibility was in the mind of many general officers at that time. A news release stated that General Walker would not cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel without a direct order, because he did not want to risk any intervention.<sup>168</sup> After this allegation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked General MacArthur to clarify the matter with General Walker. General MacArthur was also to make it clear to General Walker that he was to abstain from any such comments.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup>Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 276.

<sup>168</sup>Province, *General Walton H. Walker: The Man Who Saved Korea*, 91.

<sup>169</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 183.

The unclear command relationship between the United States and the ROK formations formed the third complicating matter. During the defense of the Pusan perimeter, the ROK forces complied with General Walker's instructions.<sup>170</sup> This willingness to adhere to General Walker's commands seemed to dwindle now that crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel loomed. This was the result of President Rhee's eagerness to pursue the aggressors. President Rhee assumed that he would be the leader of a unified Korea. Once President Rhee ordered I ROK Corps to cross into North Korea on October 1, 1950, General Walker contacted General MacArthur to clarify the command relationship.<sup>171</sup>

The final factor was the logistical state of Eighth Army after linking up with X Corps. Eighth Army had reached the limits of its operational reach, and needed resupply before it could embark on a new phase in the offensive.<sup>172</sup> Given the character of the terrain and the fact that Eighth Army already lacked supplies at the start of their breakout, resupplying would be a tremendous task. As a result of General MacArthur's decision to allocate the preponderance of port capacity in Inchon and Pusan to the out loading of X Corps, this dire situation remained.

All these factors shaped General Walker's understanding of the problem Eighth Army faced. Next to this understanding, General Walker also made two interrelated assumptions that affected his possible operational approaches. First, General Walker assumed that X Corps would come under his command after a successful completion of Operation Chromite.<sup>173</sup> This assumption in itself was not so strange. General Walker was not the only person who thought that this would be the most logical thing that General MacArthur could do. After all, X Corps staff

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<sup>170</sup>Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspective of the Operational Art*, 418.

<sup>171</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 205.

<sup>172</sup>Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 205.

<sup>173</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 189.

was comprised of several officers, including commanding General Ned Almond, that seemed to be on loan from Far Eastern Command's headquarters. For this reason, many staff officers in both Eighth Army and Far Eastern Command staff assumed that X Corps' separate role was only temporary.<sup>174</sup> The second assumption was a derivative from the first one. With X Corps under command of Eighth Army, General Walker would effectively command all ground forces on the peninsula. This meant that General Walker would act as the unified commander on the peninsula, allowing him to design his operational approach for the remainder of the ground war.<sup>175</sup> Although both assumptions were fair at the time, they proved to be false after General MacArthur announced his orders for the next stage of the war to his subordinate commanders.

Based on the before mentioned understanding of the problem and underlying assumptions, General Walker visualized two possible operational approaches.<sup>176</sup> Although both concepts were clearly distinguishable, they also had similarities. The following elements of operational art were the same for both approaches: the endstate, basing, and tempo. In the end, both approaches aimed at the destruction of the remaining NKPA formations, so that the North Korean government would have to surrender. This allowed the process of re-unification to start in the only recently separated country.

For basing, both approaches were similar. In the execution, both approaches would depend on the same bases of supply, especially in the opening phases. These bases mainly depended on the few available ports in U.N. hands. Both the ports at Pusan and Inchon were vital at the early stages, but had to be augmented for later phases by the ports of Chinnampo, at the mouth of the Taedong River near Pyongyang, to extend the operational reach of X corps. The port

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<sup>174</sup>Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspective of the Operational Art*, 419.

<sup>175</sup>Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South of the Naktong North to the Yalu*, 609.

<sup>176</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 189.



of Wonsan on the east side of the peninsula would be vital to sustain I ROK corps. Both ports allowed Eighth Army to extend its operational reach, enabling the establishment of the buffer zone north of the Pyongyang-Wonsan line. To make both concepts work, General Walker had to achieve and maintain a tempo high enough to enable a successful envelopment.

The first possible approach General Walker visualized was a three-phased operation to envelope the remaining body of NKPA troops, by seizing the east-west road connecting Pyongyang to Wonsan. The first phase comprised of an attack by X Corps to seize and secure the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. A two-pronged attack followed this phase. I Corps and II ROK Corps would attack from Pyongyang in the west to Wonsan in the east, enveloping the NKPA forces south of that line. This attack was in conjunction with I ROK Corps' attack in a northern direction to seize and secure Wonsan itself. In phase three, Eighth Army would establish a buffer north of the Pyongyang-Wonsan line and clear any remaining pockets of resistance in its rear area.<sup>177</sup>

The second possible approach entailed an envelopment on a smaller scale. This approach was a two-phased operation. The first phase would comprise of a near simultaneous three-pronged attack. In this phase X corps would seize and secure Pyongyang, while I and II ROK Corps would attack towards Wonsan through the Seoul, Chorwon-Pyongyang corridor. I ROK Corps formed the third attack to seize and secure Wonsan. In the following phase, Eighth Army would establish the same buffer, and conduct the same mop-up operations as in phase three of the first approach.<sup>178</sup> In both approaches IX corps, which was unable to participate in the breakout from the Pusan perimeter, would provide rear area security.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup>Ibid.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid., 190.

<sup>179</sup>Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South of the Nakdong North to the Yalu*, 545.

From the perspective of decisive points, lines of operations, phasing and transitions, culmination, and risk, the two approaches differed from each other. Because of the difference in the lines of operations for both approaches, (see figure 1) the decisive points were also different. From the point of culmination, the first approach was more demanding. It involved more movement and maneuver for especially I and II ROK Corps, initially trailing X Corps, increasing the risk of culmination for these two corps. The difference in risk for both approaches had to do with the balance between a quick launch of the offensive in relation with the state of supply, particularly in the case of I and II ROK Corps. A quick launch of the operation would mean that Eighth Army would not be properly supplied. However, it also meant that the NKPA would have less opportunity to establish proper defenses. Balancing this risk with the opportunity differed for both approaches, because the distances that had to be covered would be very different. However, General Walker tended to be deliberate and cautious by nature.<sup>180</sup>

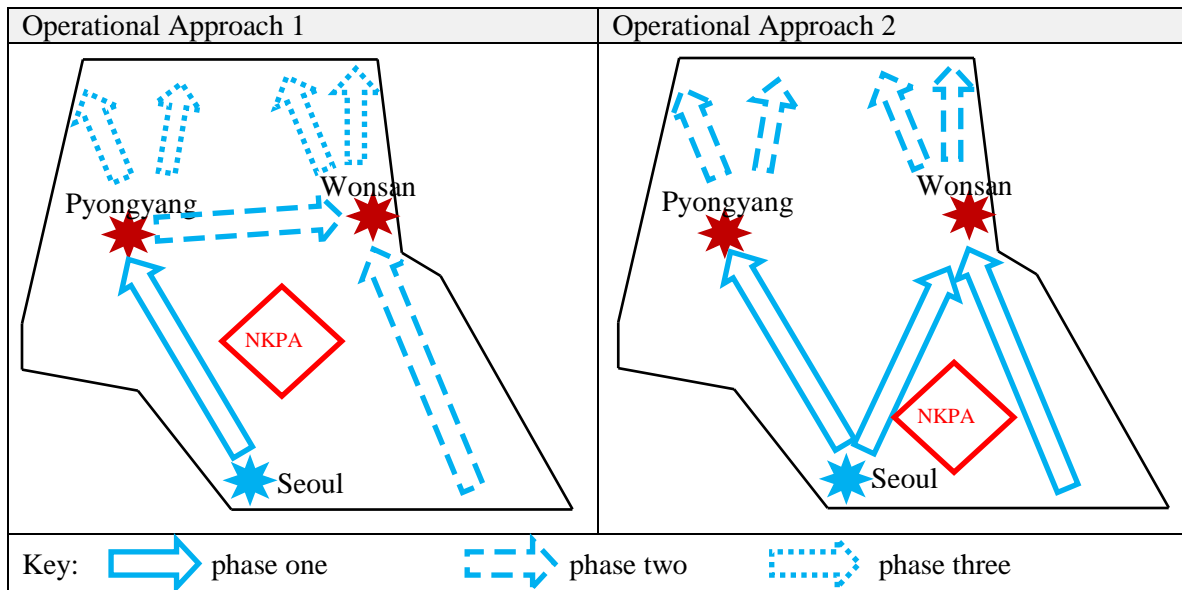


Figure 1: Sketch of principle of Operational Approaches.

<sup>180</sup>Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 276.

General Walker preferred the first approach.<sup>181</sup> Although the envelopment envisioned in this approach was less deep than the one attempted during Operation Chromite, it was still deep into North Korea. This fact combined with General Walker's earlier experience meant that the timing and sequencing of the tactical actions was key to any chance of success. It would be vital to first set the trap before springing it with I ROK corps' attack. It meant that I and II ROK Corps had to be in the right position to start their attack from Pyongyang to Wonsan, before I ROK Corps started their attack to seize and secure Wonsan. Early seizure of Wonsan would alarm the NKPA. This automatically meant that the attempt to envelop likely failed and would be a turning movement at best. As a result, the UN forces would have to carry the attack further north to destroy the NKPA. The only alternative open to General Walker in such a case would be to order I ROK Corps to act as the enveloping force, by having them attack from Wonsan to Pyongyang. This could potentially save the whole intention behind the approach.

Although General Walker was not allowed to act as the unified ground commander, as it turned out, and his preferred approach was never executed, this situation did arise in early October. On October 9, 1950, I ROK corps did seize Wonsan well ahead of other Eighth Army elements.<sup>182</sup> Understanding the situation as it developed, General Walker suggested to General MacArthur that I ROK Corps continue its attack in a westerly direction. In doing so, General Walker tried to still comply with his higher commander's intent and complete the envelopment from the opposite direction. However, General MacArthur decided against General Walker's suggestion.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup>Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspective of the Operational Art*, 420.

<sup>182</sup>Mossman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Ebb and Flow*, 19.

<sup>183</sup>Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Directive: The First Year*, 205.

Overall both approaches had similarities and differences. Both generals envisioned the envelopment as the broad general action to bring final defeat upon North Korea. To do this, both generals understood the significance of Pyongyang and Wonsan. In both approaches these two cities were key and needed to be seized. However, the role of Wonsan in the execution of the operation differed. For Walker, Wonsan was the end of the enveloping maneuver in a concept that was solely based on ground movement under his unified command. For MacArthur, Wonsan would be the start of the enveloping maneuver, after an amphibious landing by X Corps, separate from Eighth Army's command. Therefore depending on a combination of maritime and ground operations. This made the synchronization for General MacArthur's concept far more complicated, and more susceptible for friction. The friction caused by the delayed out loading of X Corps and the discovery of sea mines at Wonsan, made the synchronization of the envelopment overall unsuccessful.

## CONCLUSION

The approaches of General MacArthur and Walker were influenced by both their personalities and their war experiences. As for the personalities, General MacArthur and General Walker were almost polar opposites. MacArthur had a large distance between him and his staff, and Walker did not. General Walker visited the front frequently to check on progress and get a feel for the situation. General MacArthur visited the front very much for the same reason, but while doing so was always working on his image as a warfighter during those visits. General Walker wanted to stay away from politics and press, whereas MacArthur loved politics and press. The difference in personality reflected in their approaches. General Walker devised a more methodical approach versus the more daring, therefore maybe at first glance more appealing approach of General MacArthur.

The World War II experiences of both generals differed, because the character of the military problem differed. One might argue that in a sense the military problem was similar. In

both cases the question was how to get to Japan and Germany to defeat both the countries. However, the character of the theaters was so different, that the character of warfare differed. For General MacArthur in the Pacific Theater of Operations, getting to Japan meant crossing a non-contiguous battle space, where bypassing of the enemy was part of the solution, due to the lack of inherent mobility of the enemy forces.<sup>184</sup> Bypassing an island while commanding the sea led to the isolation of significant Japanese formations. Therefore one might say that bypassing automatically rendered the isolated formations irrelevant to the war overall. In this instance bypassing equated isolation, and therefore defeat. This very much suits a terrain oriented approach, where the selection of the next island drove operations, and not the location of enemy forces. The consideration of inter-island sustainment fits this sort of approach.

For General Walker in the European Theater of Operations, however, the character of the operating environment was vastly different. Here, due to the contiguous battle space, and inherent ground mobility of land forces, bypassing had a different result. Bypassed enemy, although isolated was not automatically rendered irrelevant for the rest of the war. Therefore this enemy was not yet defeated, unless the enemy pocket was actually eliminated. For the operational artist sequencing these actions was critical and difficult. The character of this theater lends itself for a more methodical approach, in which sustainment of the ground forces was the main consideration.

The suggested and actually executed approach both reflect the personalities and experiences. General Walker's suggested approach was less daring than General MacArthur's ordered approach. Both of the possible approaches that Walker came up with included an envelopment and had a clear enemy focus. General MacArthur's approach also revolved around an enveloping maneuver. Likewise, this concept also had an enemy focus, very much in line with

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<sup>184</sup>Non-contiguous from a land perspective.

the Joint Chiefs' guidance. Interestingly, General MacArthur decided to not take the opportunity to still execute his intended envelopment with I ROK Corps when that unit entered Wonsan prior to X Corps' arrival. With this decision to not envelop the enemy, General MacArthur altered his approach fundamentally. Shortly thereafter MacArthur ordered the all-out drive by all available forces to the Yalu River. By doing this, General MacArthur gave up his enemy focus and turned it into a terrain focused operation.

In a sense, it is difficult to compare both approaches. It tends to be a comparison between what occurred, General MacArthur's approach, and what might have been, General Walker's suggested approach. However, given the character of the enemy and the character of the contiguous battle space one might argue that both the experience and the suggested approach of General Walker would have been more appropriate for concluding the Korean War.

The previous operational experiences of senior commanders contain the potential for both brilliance and disaster. The art is to be aware of this and to investigate the relevance of this experience to the matter at hand. Commanders should question the relevance of their own experiences when developing an operational approach. Staff officers, on the other hand, should be aware of the commander's previous operational experiences. For it is this experience that might lead to a brilliant approach. The challenge for staff officers is and always will be to assist the commander in preventing potential disaster, if experiences are less relevant, or not relevant at all.

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